

New Delaware Certificate of Multiliteracy recognizes advanced language skills

Delaware has developed a new Certificate of Multiliteracy to honor and recognize students with high levels of language proficiency in addition to English, Secretary of Education Susan Bunting announced today.

The certificate applauds students for attaining high levels of language proficiency in multiple languages and also values native language proficiency for the 11,000 English learners in Delaware.

Students can use the certificate as a credential to help differentiate them as applicants for jobs, college entrance or the military.

“Delaware recognizes the hard work that goes into learning more than one language and we want to make it easier for employers and institutes of higher education to identify those who offer such valuable skills,” Bunting said. “This certificate will help students promote their talents and also create a tangible reminder to all of us of the benefits of multilingualism.”

Representative Joe Miro was the prime sponsor of Delaware’s

Certificate of Multiliteracy bill, which was established by [House Joint Resolution \(HJR\) 4](#) and signed by Delaware Governor John Carney on July 21. HJR 4 directs the Delaware Department of Education to establish the criteria and the process for awarding the certificates by August 30, 2017.

“Delaware understands the value of encouraging students to learn new languages and immerse themselves in other cultures,” said Governor John Carney. “We appreciate the hard work of our state legislators to establish Delaware’s Certificate of Multiliteracy and we are excited for Delaware students to have such an advantage as they enter college and the workforce.”

Delaware’s Certificate of Multiliteracy is modeled after the national [Seal of Biliteracy](#), which is a national effort to have all states to recognize the importance of language learning as a critical career and workplace skill.

“Delaware’s Certificate of Multiliteracy is a remarkable and encouraging step toward recognizing the arduous linguistic and academic effort all students – particularly our DE English Learners – invest in our schools,” said Oribel McFann-Mora, President of Delaware English Language Learners Teachers and Advocates (DELLTA). “Moreover, may our English learners’ amazing multilingual abilities be officially recognized as assets henceforth and the rule rather than the exception.”

Delaware is the 26th state in the country to establish an award that honors and recognizes students with high levels of proficiency in languages in addition to English.

“World Languages today play such a crucial role in our 21st century global society. If we want our future leaders to be college and career ready, we need to arm them for linguistic and cultural success as well,” said Jennifer Short, a Spanish teacher at Dickinson High School in the Red Clay Consolidated School District and the Vice President of the Delaware Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (DECTFL).

“Granting Delaware students the opportunity to demonstrate proficiency in multiple languages by awarding them the Certificate of Multiliteracy can only make them more marketable and attractive for whatever they plan to do after high school,” Short said.

Media Contact: Susan Haberstroh,
susan.haberstroh@doe.k12.de.us, (302) 735-4003